

DISCUSSION OF THE AMENDMENTS

Claims 2, 25 and 19 are currently amended.

Claims 2-14, 16-18 and 20 were previously presented.

Claim 21 is new.

Upon entry of the amendment claims 1-21 will be active.

The amendments to the claims and specification are supported by the claims as previously presented and on pages 2 and 3 of the specification.

No new matter has been added.

REMARKS

The Office rejected claims 1-3, 15 and 16 over the combination of Huang (U.S. 5,332,705) and Broecker (U.S. 5,063,194). On page 8 of the Office Action the Office notes that these references do not teach or suggest stripping at from 70 to 250° C. As the Office will note, claim 1 has been amended such that the stripping is from 50 to 250°C. Accordingly, the claimed process would not have been obvious over the combination of Huang and Broecker.

Applicants note that the Office relies on White (GB 907,348) which describes reactivating a catalyst with hydrogen at a temperature above 150°C. However, Applicants submit that while the process in White involves hydrogenation catalysts the catalysts used in the process of White are for completely different feedstock than that used in the claimed process.

The claimed process involves C₂-C₃ hydrocarbons whereas White uses gasoline feedstocks that boil in the range of 0-200°C (page 1, lines 67-69). This is in sharp contrast to the claimed process which uses C₂-C₃ hydrocarbons which boil substantially below 0°C. Accordingly, Applicants submit that the process described in White is not combinable with processes that use C₂ hydrocarbons such as that described in Huang and Cosyns (GB 1,158,418).

Similarly, the Office relies on Broecker which describes metallic meshes, foils or fabrics. However, Broecker involves hydrogenating HDHL to HLIN (column 2, lines 65-68) which have boiling points well above that for C₂ and C₃ hydrocarbons. Accordingly, the claimed process is different than that in Broecker. In addition, Applicants note that the other references cited use ceramic supports. Applicants submit that Broecker is not combinable with Huang which uses a completely different feedstock and a different (ceramic) catalyst support.

Overall, Applicants respectfully submit that the Office has improperly combined references. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the Office withdraw the rejections of the claims under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

Finally, Applicants note that the specification and claims have been amended such that they are free of the criticisms on pages 3-7 of the Office Action.

In light of the remarks above, Applicants submit that the application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

In the event the Examiner believes an interview might serve in any way to advance the prosecution of this application, the undersigned is available at the telephone number noted below.

The Office is authorized to charge any necessary fees to Deposit Account No. 22-0185.

Applicant believes no additional fee is due with this response. However, if a fee is due, please charge our Deposit Account No. 22-0185, under Order No. 13156-00008-US from which the undersigned is authorized to draw.

Dated: August 13, 2008

Respectfully submitted,

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